CIA Commission To Seek Extension

Vice President Rockefeller said yesterday that the presidential commission investigating the CIA's domestic activities will ask for a few extra weeks to finish its job.

The investigation was scheduled to conclude April 4, but Rockefeller said the eight-member commission will ask President Ford for an extension "a matter of a few weeks past our deadline."

"It would look as though we're falling a little bit behind," he said.

The commission heard three more secret witnesses yesterday, its ninth full day of private testimony, and had three others on hand but ran out of time. All were officials from the CIA's operations directorate.

Rockefeller refused to discuss in any way allegations that the CIA was engaged in various assassination plots against foreign political leaders.

The Vice President said the White House commission would continue to pursue its task — investigating any domestic violations by the CIA of its statutory charter — but Rockefeller was careful not to make any comment that would include the so-called assassination episodes within that field or rule them out.

At the White House yesterday, press secretary Ron Nessen suggested that the allegations of assassination might be better handled by the newly formed Senate intelligence operations committee chaired by Frank Church (D-Idaho), which has a broader charter.

"There will be an opportunity for the Church committee to look into this matter," Nessen said. "The President told Church he would cooperate to the maximum extent."

The subject of assassinations conceivably could be construed as "domestic activities" if investigators establish that a plot to murder someone originated within the United States.

Nessen referred reporters to a comment made Sunday on television by White House adviser Donald Rumsfeld who said about assassinations: "It is certainly my impression that this President feels that that is not happening during his presidency and his intention is that it not happen during his administration."